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ABSTRACT

The Indian Education Act is the only federal program that specifies parent committees rather than parent advisory committees, vesting specific responsibilities and right to consultation, review, and approval upon the parent committees. Thus it is imperative that parent committee members understand these rights and responsibilities and become involved in all levels of project development from needs assessment, to monitoring of activities and the evaluation of the project. They must be consulted regularly and be involved in the operation of the project. This guide outlines the rules and regulations concerning) parent committees and local education agencies as provided for in federal regulations. (AH)

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PARENT COMMITTEE AND LOCAL EDUCATIONAL AGENCY (LEA)

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The following material on Parent Committee and Local Education Agency (LEA) was developed by Resource and Evaluation Center II, United Tribes Educational Technical Center, Bismarck, North Dakota. The contents of this programmatic guide were developed with financial assistance from the Office of Indian Education programs, Department of Education, Contract Number 300820025. However, the contents do not necessarily represent the position of policy of that agency and a reader should not infer endorsement by the Federal Government.

Material utilized in this guide was developed by: Resource and Evaluation Center I, Native American Research Institute, Washington, D.C.

INDIAN EDUCATION ACT
PARENT COMMITTEE RESPONSIBILITIES

The Indian Education Act is the only Federal Program that specifies Parent Committees rather than Parent Advisory Committees, vesting specific responsibilities and rights to consultation, review, and approval upon the Parent Committees. It is thus imperative that Parent Committee members understand these rights and responsibilities and become involved in all levels of project development from needs assessment, to monitoring of activities and the evaluation of the project. They must be consulted **regularly** and be involved in the operation of the project.

TITLE IV, PART A PARENT COMMITTEES

CITATIONS FROM IEA REGULATIONS	RIGHTS AND RESPONSIBILITIES	SUGGESTED PROCEDURES
PARENT COMMITTEE SELECTION *186a.20 186a.25(a)(1)	I. There must be an established and advertised process for selecting members of the parent committee. This process must assure that: (a) parents of eligible Indian students, teachers within the district, and Indian secondary students are eligible to select committee members and to serve on the parent committee; (b) At least half the members are parents, at least half the members are Indians; at least one teacher is a member; and at least one secondary student (if any Indian secondary students are enrolled in the school district) is a member. (c) any member may serve as an officer; (d) a person may serve as a member of the committee only as long as that person meets qualifications stated in (a). [Parents include persons acting in the place of parents. (186.4(b))] The regulations allow for the committee terms to be multi-year and staggered.	I. Make sure the school district develops fair procedures for parent committee selection appropriate to the community and makes them known to the community. Review and make recommendations on these procedures, and incorporate them into parent committee bylaws. Make sure the appropriate groups participate in the selection of, and are represented on, the parent committee. The terms of office should reflect the community's and project's needs. All committee members should be qualified and willing to serve.
BYLAWS 186a.41(a)	II. The parent committee is responsible for adopting bylaws which reflect its legal responsibilities and its relationship to the school district. Bylaws must include at a minimum: how officers are selected and their duties; how vacated terms are filled; how business meetings are conducted; and how the bylaws are amended.	II. Establish these bylaws in coordination with project staff and the LEA administration. They should have the approval of the school board if they include commitments from the LEA.

This section is adapted from material developed by Tom Crawford, Resource and Evaluation Center III, United Indians of All Tribes Foundation.

* **NOTE: 100 numbers will change to 200 numbers in the new Title IV Rules and Regulations due out in the near future.**

TITLE IV, PART A PARENT COMMITTEES

CITATIONS FROM IEA REGULATIONS	RIGHTS AND RESPONSIBILITIES	SUGGESTED PROCEDURES
PARTICIPATION IN THE PROJECT 186a.41(b)	III. Parent Committeess have an important role and substantial responsibilities to participate in all aspects of the project including:	III. Establish procedures for parent committee involvement in all phases of the project's operation and evaluation, and follow through with the activities these procedures require. These procedures might be included in the bylaws or as an attachment to them.
186a.21 186a.25(a)(4)	(a) needs assessment	(a) Take an active role in assessing and prioritizing the needs of Indian students in the school district. Make sure that the needs as identified and prioritized are appropriate to the community and can be addressed with the amount of funding available. Do not let the personal preferences or interests of any individual come before the real, documented needs of Indian students. The specific activities that the parent committee will perform for the needs assessment should be written in a set of policies and procedures.
186a.22 186a.25(a)(3)	(b) project design	(b) Offer assistance to the project staff in determining measurable objectives, activities, resources and budget. Ensure that objectives reflect the assessed needs as prioritized. Recognizing that your role is policy-making rather than administrative, participate in the operation of the project through consultation with project staff.
186a.23 186a.25(a)(3) 186a.25(a)(12)	(c) project evaluation	(c) As part of the project evaluation, monitor project activities to ensure their effectiveness. Consult with other parents of Indian children and the community in general to gauge project success.

TITLE IV, PART A PARENT COMMITTEES

CITATIONS FROM IEA REGULATIONS	RIGHTS AND RESPONSIBILITIES	SUGGESTED PROCEDURES
PROJECT STAFF **186a.41(d)** **186a.41(e)** **186a.42**	IV. The parent committee is responsible for: (a) advising the LEA on the development of policies and procedures, for hiring project staff, and (b) reviewing the qualifications of and making recommendations concerning applicants for project staff positions. No member of the parent committee, or of a parent committee member's immediate family, may be hired as a member of the project staff.	IV. Make recommendations to the LEA on hiring policies and procedures for project staff. Make recommendations regarding applicants for project staff positions in accordance with the established policies and procedures. Monitor the implementation of the LEA's hiring procedures and ensure that they continue to reflect the interests of the Indian community and the needs of Indian students.
PUBLIC HEARINGS **186a.24** **186a.26(a)**	V. The parent committee should participate in the annual public hearing at which the LEA: (a) describes alternatives available under Title IV; (b) describes the proposed Title IV project; (c) seeks comments and recommendations from those at the hearing; (d) provides enough time to discuss the project and other ways to meeting students' needs. If the proposal is for the continuation of a multi-year project, the public hearing should deal with all aspects of the project to date and for the rest of the project period.	V. Make sure that the LEA schedules the hearing enough in advance of the proposal deadline to allow meaningful community input; that it lets as many Indian community members as possible know about it; and that it discusses the entire project with the community clearly and completely. Ask questions about the project at the hearing, encourage others to ask questions, and, if appropriate, recommend revisions.
APPLICATION APPROVAL **186a.41(c)** **186a.26(b)**	VI. The parent committee should review and provide written approval of the project application (whether for a new or continuing project), and any amendments to the application.	VI. Find out how the proposal for the next year is being planned and written, and offer to help and/or write the proposal. Provide suggestions and assistance to project administration and staff in this planning and grant-writing process.

TITLE IV, PART A PARENT COMMITTEES

CITATIONS FROM IEA REGULATIONS	RIGHTS AND RESPONSIBILITIES	SUGGESTED PROCEDURES
INFORMATION **186a.40(g)** **186a.40(m)** **186a.41(f)**	VII. The parent committee has: (a) the right to access necessary information including -a copy of the project proposal -applicable regulations -the grant award document -correspondence to or from the Office of Indian Education, and -any other records relating to the project, including financial records, except those protected by law from disclosure. (b) the responsbility to make available to the community copies of its records such as bylaws, minutes of meetings, and the list of committee members, except those protected by law from disclosure.	VII. Request copies of all pertinent documents from the LEA. Maintain an organized file of this information. Be responsive to the community.
PARENT COMMITTEE TRAINING **186a.40(h)**	VIII. Parent committee members should receive assistance, if needed, in preparing themselves to carry out their responsibilities.	VIII. Request assistance and training necessary to fulfill the role of parent committee; participate in this training; become familiar with the legal rights and responsibilities of the parent committee and with skills that will help the committee carry out its duties (including proposal writing, basic management, communication skills, and educational planning). The Resource and Evaluation Center II can help provide training in these areas.

SPECIFIC PARENT COMMITTEE FUNCTIONS IN EVALUATION, NEEDS ASSESSMENT AND PROJECT APPLICATION DEVELOPMENT AND REVIEW

I. EVALUATION

A. Purpose: to measure the effectiveness of the project's components (including objectives, activities, resources and systems) during and at the end of the project year, to interpret the results, and to make recommendations or suggest changes based on those interpretations.

B. Functions

1. **Evaluation Plan:** The Parent Committee should play a major role in developing the overall project evaluation plan. Moreover, the Parent Committee should offer specific recommendations regarding its own on-going evaluation responsibilities. At the onset of each project cycle there should be a clear understanding between the LEA and the Parent Committee as to whom the Committee should work with regarding evaluation, namely, the LEA, the independent evaluator, the Project Director or an internal staff person assigned evaluation responsibilities. The Parent Committee should also be fully aware of the Title IV evaluation role and responsibilities of the LEA and project staff, in order to better understand where the Committee's functions fit into the evaluation effort as a whole.

2. **Project Monitoring:** On a regular basis during the project year, the Parent Committee should assist the LEA in determining whether the project is being carried out according to the stated intents. Consider the following questions.

   a. Is the project adhering to the stated objectives? Are any revisions needed?

   b. Is the project adhering to the time frames set down in the grant application? Are those time frames still appropriate?

   c. Is the project operating within the budgetary parameters approved by the Office of Indian Education?

   d. Are project staff performing their tasks satisfactorily?

   e. Is the project being well managed?

   Project monitoring can be greatly facilitated by holding regular meetings with project staff. Also, all LEA and project files should be open to the public for review (except, of course, those of a confidential nature relating to individual students). The Parent Committee should make use of these files only as appropriate.

3. **Personnel:** The Parent Committee should be involved to some degree with the assessment of staff performance. Remember, however, that the LEA is the offical employer of the Title IV staff. Parent Committees should assume no responsibility which would interfere with or jeopardize this employer/employee relationship.

The extent to which a Parent Committee exercises responsibilities in evaluating staff performance, will vary from project to project. Usually the larger projects afford more Parent Committee involvement, while the smaller ones have less. However, different factors come into play in different settings, so there is no rule of thumb as to the amount of Parent Committee involvement in evaluating staff performance.

Since personnel matters can be a sensitive area, whatever the degree of involvement the Parent Committee and LEA agree to do, it's important that there be written confirmation of the Committee's authority and/or responsibility. These may be specified:

a. in the Committee By-Laws (if formally endorsed by the LEA);

b. as an amendment to the school district's Personnel Policies and Procedures; or

c. as a written agreement between the LEA and Parent Committee, perhaps in conjunction with the guidelines pertaining to Parent Committee involvement in hiring procedures such as screening applicants for project staff positions.

4. **506 Forms:** The Parent Committee should be aware of the LEA's method of collecting 506 forms and regularly monitor applications of that process. When appropriate, suggestions for modifying or improving those procedures should be offered to the LEA. Further, the Parent Committee should inform the LEA of any known students for whom 506 forms are not on file.

5. **Community Linkage:** The Parent Committee serves a vital role of linking the school district (including project staff) with the Indian community. As such, it is responsible for ensuring that an effective two-way channel of communication exists between school and parents. Further, it should monitor the LEA's procedures for keeping parents informed about project activities and, perhaps more importantly, project progress. Making recommendations for improving the effectiveness of those procedures is clearly a Parent Committee function. Conversely, as the offical parental body representing the community which elected it, the Parent Committee should consistently and actively seek community input on all aspects of the project operation. It is essential that such input be an integral part of the on-going evaluation process.

6. **Project Application:** In addition to involvement in the development of the project application, the Parent Committee should monitor actions taken by the LEA as follow-up to the Public Hearing. Community input must be considered in writing the grant proposal.

7. **Independent Evaluation:** The Parent Committee should be involved in some manner with the selection of the independent evaluator and the specification of his/her tasks. Ideally, the Parent Committee should also meet with that individual to provide input on the project process. As one of the primary audiences for the independent evaluator's report, the Parent Committee should ensure that the report is carefully reviewed and given serious consideration when reassessing project activities, project management, etc.

II. NEEDS ASSESSMENT

A. Purpose: to provide a rationale for the determination or reassessment of the goals and objectives of a project.

B. Functions

1. **Initiate Early Involvement in Needs Assessment Design**

a. The Parent Committee should make certain it is notified well in advance of the application development/deadline so that its considerations about the needs assessment design may be solicited.

B. Parent Committee members should be involved as much as possible in the design of any needs assessment survey, such as a questionnaire or interview schedule. If there is a feeling on the part of Parent Committee members that a particular survey item is inappropriate, this should be communicated to the project staff and the LEA for proper consideration.

c. The Parent Committee should review the needs assessment survey to ensure that it is comprehensive in covering all main issues; that the directions, cover-letter and all items are easily understandable to other parents; and that it is presented in a non-threatening manner to parents, students, teachers and other community members.

d. The Parent Committee should suggest to the project staff and the LEA the most convenient time for administering the survey. Income tax time, holidays, traditional feast days, other periods of tribal celebration, or periods of mourning may interfere with the implementation of the survey.

e. If a mail-out survey is used, the Parent Committee should suggest what they consider a reasonable amount of response time for setting deadlines.

2. **Solicit Parental Interest and Involvement**

The Parent Committee should informally encourage other parents and members of the community to actively participate in the survey so that they may understand the nature and purpose of a needs assessment. Remember, it is the responsibility of the LEA to actually conduct the needs assessment, however, the Parent Committee must be consulted.

3. **Obtain Other Student Data**

a. The Parent Committee should request various types of information from the LEA, including:
   1) student achievement levels,
   2) results of tests,
   3) drop-out rates,
   4) attendance records, and
   5) other data that may assist in identifying the needs of Indian students.

b. The Parent Committee should ensure that such information be kept on file by the project. Remember that the confidentiality of such information must be protected.

c. When looking at student data, the sources of the data should be considered. Often the resources of the data (e.g. parents, teachers, students, etc.) are just as important as the type of data (e.g. grade reports vs. standardized test scores). Community and other tribal leaders should be consulted if appropriate.

4. **Rank The Needs By Priority**

The Parent Committee should actively participate in ranking the needs by priority. Remember that because a need is ranked as a top priority, it does not necessarily mean that it must be addressed by Title IV project. Among the distinctions to make in assessing and ranking the needs by priority are:

a. Whether the need is to produce an increased level of performance (an incremental need) or to maintain a level of performance

b. Whether the need is short-term or long-term

c. Whether the need is severe or slight

d. Whether the need can be addressed adequately

e. Whether the need is temporary or permanent

f. Whether the need is exhibited by a large number of students or by a few individuals

5. **Consider Other Programs**

The Parent Committee should request information on all other programs offered by a school so that they are aware of the intents and purposes of other programs. This information is useful in deciding whether a particular need, including the first priority need, is addressed by some other program. If existing program services are inadequate for Indian students, ask why that is the case and what may be done to remedy it.

6. **Consider Appropriateness**

In ranking the needs to be addressed by the project, the Parent Committee functions in a decision-making capacity. Remember that there should be a direct relationship between the needs and recommended objectives and activities of a project.

Do not let the personal preferences of any individual come before the real and documented needs of Indian students. Although a particular item may receive a high need ranking, if it is not appropriate to community/tribal values, project intent or if it is not feasible, the Parent Committee should raise these concerns.

7. **Recommend Activities and Alternatives**

a. After ranking needs by priority, the Parent Committee should suggest to the project staff and LEA any activities or program components that they feel would appropriately and effectively meet those needs.

b. The Parent Committee should periodically suggest alternative methods of assessing needs.

c. The Parent Committee should offer other approaches to meeting a need if the Committee does not see the need being effectively or efficiently met.

8. **Establish Parent Committee Role in Needs Assessment**

The Parent Committee should discuss with the LEA the specific activities that it will perform in the needs assessment process. These should be a part of a set of policies and procedures which can be negotiated with the LEA and which may be part of the Parent Committee by-laws.

III. APPLICATION DEVELOPMENT AND REVIEW

A. Purpose: to ensure that the project is designed to meet the needs of Indian students and reflects community input.

B. Functions

1. **Awareness of Application Deadline:** The Parent Committee should know the application deadline date and the necessary steps for submitting application.

   a. The Parent Committee should ensure that the application process is started well before the deadline. It is certainly **not** necessary to have the application packet before beginning the process. Indeed, this process should be well underway before the application packets are distributed by OIE.

   b. The Parent Committee should be aware that application packets are distributed at least 45 days before the deadline date. The Parent Committee should check to see whether or not the application packet has actually been received by LEA.

2. **Developing Goals and Objectives:** The Parent Committee should participate in developing the overall goals and specific objectives of the project, keeping in mind that these goals and objectives should be based on the priority needs identified during the needs assessment.

   a. Parent Committee members should know the difference between goals and objectives. General goal statements indicate the general direction or intent of the project. Objectives, on the other hand, must be written as specific statements of the results expected.

   b. At a minimum, the Parent Committee should review goal statements and objectives prepared by the project staff to ensure that they address the priority needs of the Indian students. Parent Committee members should volunteer advice and/or assistance to the project staff in developing specific objectives.

3. **Recommending Approaches and Activities:** Once the goals and objectives have been determined, the Parent Committee should review and discuss ways in which the goals and objectives could be achieved.

   a. Consideration should be given to:
   -whether or not the method is appropriate to the community and/or school

   -whether other methods could be used to achieve the objectives

   -the cost of alternative methods

   -the effectiveness of alternative methods

   If a Title IV, Part A program already exists, the Parent Committee should review the project's effectiveness to date and also use the above consideration to recommend whether the existing project components should be continued, modified, or dropped, and whether or not other components should be added.

   b. Based on such discussion, the Parent Committee should be able to recommend what components they feel should be included in the project and also to justify those choices. These recommendations should be used to guide the project staff in preparing the written project application.

4. **Public Hearing:** The Parent Committee should review the draft application and make recommendations on the proposed project as part of the public hearing.

a. When the LEA schedules the public hearing, the Parent Committee should have some input to ensure that:

-the hearing is scheduled well in advance of the application deadline to allow time for making any necessary changes to the proposed project

-the hearing is scheduled at a time which is convenient for community attendance and which does not conflict with important events or holidays

-the hearing is well publicized

b. Parent Committee members should attend and actively participate in the public hearing and should encourage other community members to do so. Parent Committee and other community members should ask questions to make sure that they fully understand the project. They should also make use of this opportunity to express their views or concerns about the project.

c. Those persons attending the hearing should review the proposed project application to make sure that:

-the proposed project addresses needs identified during the needs assessment

-the objectives are written as specific statements of results expected

-the proposed activities are related to the stated objectives and are clearly outlined

-the evaluation plan is included

-the proposed expenditures are reasonable and necessary for achieving the project objectives

-the project staffing plan abides by the Indian Preference requirements of the Indian Education Act Regulations

d. The proposed project should demonstrate that consideration was given to any earlier recommendations of the Parent Committee and/or community. If not, those present at the hearing may want to recommend changes.

5. **Final Review and Approval:** The Parent Committee must review and approve in writing the final project application before it will be considered for funding by OIE. During this final review, the Parent Committee should again address the topics listed earlier for consideration at the public hearing. The Parent Committee should also ensure that the final application reflects the community input received at the public hearing.

LOCAL EDUCATIONAL AGENCY (LEA)

What the rules and regulations say. . .

186a.40 Responsibility of the local educational agency.

It is the responsibility of the LEA to–

(a) Ensure that a parent committee is selected in accordance with 186a.20;

(b) Consult with and involve the parent committee in all phases of the project;

(c) Perform a needs assessment that meets the requirements of 186a.21;

(d) Design a project that meets the requirements of 186a.22 and an evaluation plan that meets the requirements of 186a.23;

(e) Conduct a public hearing in accordance with 186a.24;

(f) Secure the parent committee's written approval ofthe project application, applications for continuation awards, and amendments to applications (including revisions to the project budget and project design) before those documents are submitted to the Secretary;

(g) Provide the parent committee with copies of 45 CFR Parts 186 and 186a, other applicable regulations, the grant award document, and correspondence to or from the Department of Education relating to the project;

(h) Prepare the parent committee to carry out its responsibilities by, for example, holding workshops on 45 CFR Parts 186 and 186a and on other applicable regulations;

(i) With the advice of the parent committee, develop policies and procedures relating to the hiring of project staff;

(j) Hire the project stuff after considering any recommendations of the parent committee;

(k) Use the best available talents and resources, including persons from the Indian community, in carrying out the project;

(l) Monitor and evaluate the project in accordance with an evaluation plan that meets the requirements of 186a.23;

(m) Make available to the parent committee and to the Indian community records, including financial records, relating to the project, except those records that are protected by law from disclosure; and

(n) Ensure that a student certification form is on file for each student included in the count of Indian students on which the amount of an entitlement is based.

(Pub. L. 81-874, Sections 303-305; 20 U.S.C. 241bb–(241dd)

186a.41 Responsibilities of the parent committee.

It is the responsibility of the parent committee to–

(a) Adopt by-laws. These by-laws shall include, at a minimum, provisions on–

(1) The selection and duties of officers;

(2) Filling vacated terms on the committee;

(3) The conduct of business meetings; and

(4) Amending the by-laws;

(b) Participate in the assessment of needs, and the design, operation, and evaluation of the project;

(c) Review and approve in writing, before they are submitted to the Secretary, the project application, applications for continuing awards, and amendments to applications (including revisions to the project budget and project design);

(d) Advise the LEA on the development of policies and procedures relating to the hiring of project staff;

(e) Review the qualifications of, and make recommendations concerning, applicants for project staff positions; and

(f) Make available to the community copies of its records, such as by-laws, minutes of meetings, and the list of committee members except those records that are protected by law from disclosure.

(Pub. L. 81-874, Sections 305(b)(2) (B), (C), 20 U.S.C. 241dd(b)(2) (B) (C))